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Chinese People's Liberation Army Ground Forces Projections: 1994-2010 (U)

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Intelligence and Threat Analysis Brief

ATC-RA-1100-137-93
ICOD: 1 September 1993

SUBJECT: Chinese People's Liberation Army Ground Force
Projections 1994-2010 (U)

(U) This brief addresses the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) ground force projections through 2010.



(U) Key Judgments

(U) For the short-term, China will try to avoid armed conflict while it focuses on economic growth.

(U) For the long-term, the rise of Japan, Russia, and a united Korea as threats to China's regional supremacy will increase the likelihood of regional tensions.



(U) Regional Situation

(U) China is faced with three distinct regional problems. First, the military balance in the Pacific has been changed because of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the drawdown of the US and Russian presence in Asia. These events have heightened China's concern for potential Japanese military expansion. Second, China must resolve the Taiwan issue. A peaceful settlement is preferred, but China will maintain a credible military capability to forestall Taiwan independence. The third regional problem involves interregional hostilities and territorial disputes along the Chinese periphery.

(U) A potential inter-Korean conflict and North Korea's nuclear program pose the most pressing problems for

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Chinese statecraft for the near term. Although China is seeking regional stability through statecraft, the South China Sea region is the most likely scenario for armed involvement by the Chinese. China, which claims sovereignty over the entire South China Sea, and a number of China's neighbors, most notably Vietnam, have conflicting claims in the Spratly Islands.

economic growth, and to enhance China's position as a world power. China does not aspire to become an adversary or ally of the West or to be viewed as a threat to its Asian neighbors.

(U) Elsewhere, regarding China's territorial dispute with India, the Chinese want to continue their friendship with Pakistan while avoiding direct involvement in an India-Pakistan war. Although Russia is the only nation that could pose a significant ground incursion threat, the Chinese perceive a major conflict with the Russians as unlikely and have reduced their forces along the Sino-Russian border. Aside from these diverse sets of regional issues, China is faced with ethnic unrest and rapid, disproportionate economic growth. These internal problems are straining the national fabric and the current political structure.

(U) Grand Strategy. The three goals of China's grand strategy are to maintain the country's sovereign boundaries, to provide a peaceful environment for continued

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defense mission.

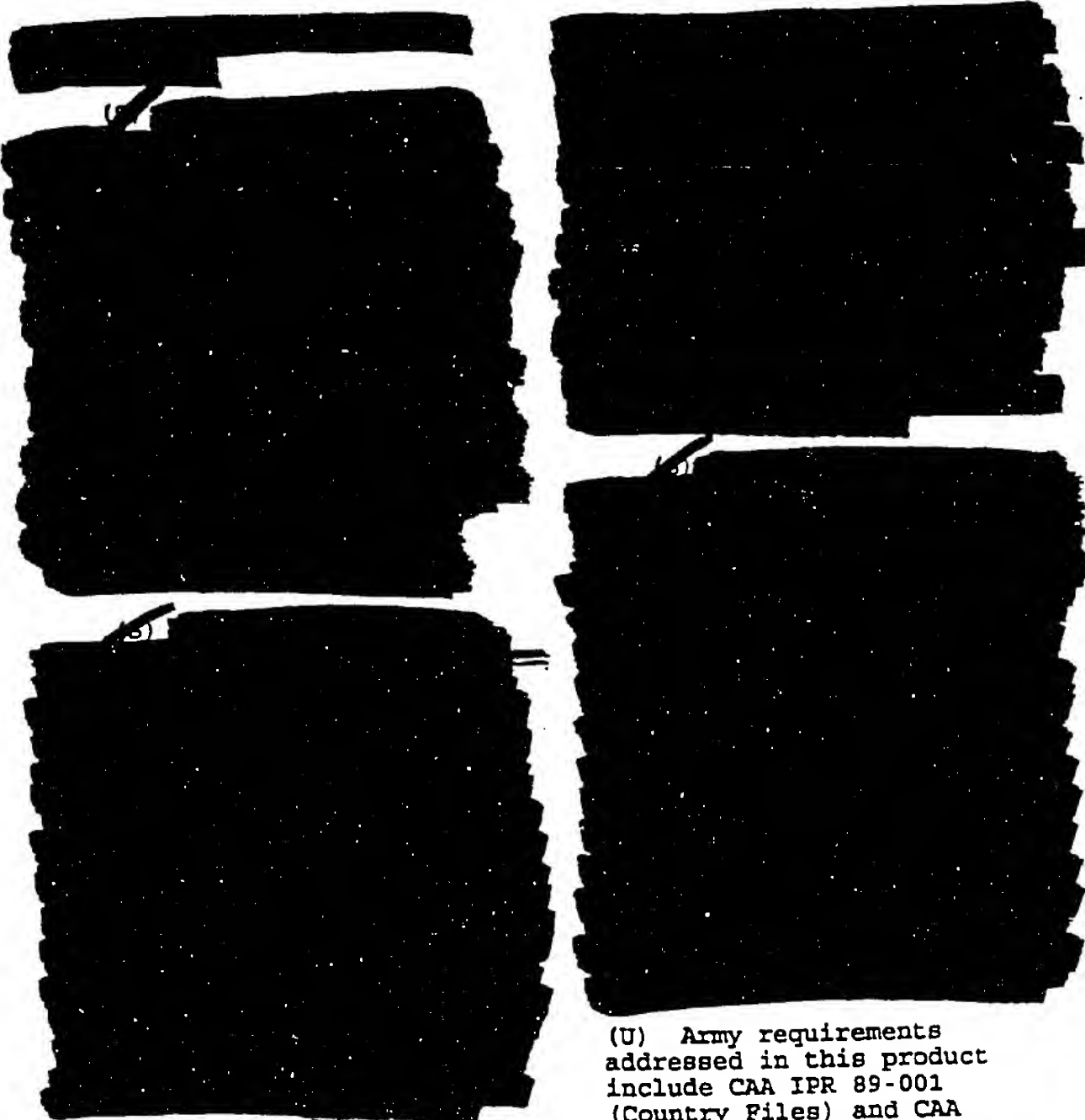
(U) Forecast

(U) Changes in Threat. China will enter the 21st Century with increased worries about Japanese rearmament and a nuclear capable North Korea, India, or Pakistan. For the short-term, China will try to avoid armed conflict while focusing on economic growth. Should the Spratly Island dispute not be resolved peacefully, China may take military action. China's ability to forge peaceful relations with Japan, its principal economic rival, and the political and economic directions taken by the Russians will have the most significant impact for the midterm. For the long-term, the rise of Japan, Russia, and a united Korea as threats to China's regional supremacy will increase the likelihood of regional tensions.

(S) Changes in Strategy and Power. No changes to China's national goals or military art is projected. At the operational level, we will see continued progress towards the fielding of a force capable of fighting wars that are geographically limited, of short duration, and highly technological. The PLA will be unable to support Chinese power projection much beyond

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(U) Army requirements
addressed in this product
include CAA IPR 89-001
(Country Files) and CAA
memorandum 21 September 1990

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(AFPDA Requirements).

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